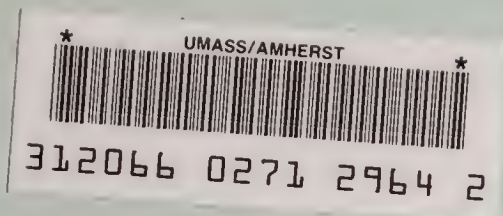


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Admissions Standards



THE COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS
BOARD OF REGENTS OF HIGHER EDUCATION

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MINIMUM ADMISSIONS STANDARDS
FOR
PUBLIC BACCALAUREATE COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES

January 10, 1984

Massachusetts Board of Regents

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I. GUIDING PRINCIPLES

The enabling legislation creating the Board of Regents called for "a comprehensive system of public higher education of high quality to enable Massachusetts' citizens to choose among and have access to a broad spectrum of educational programs." This policy of the Commonwealth embodies three principles of importance to the new system. These principles - access, quality and diversity - were emphasized by the Regents in their Long Range Plan for Public Higher Education in Massachusetts June, 1982 and must be considered further as they relate to admissions standards.

ACCESS

An American commitment to equal opportunity for all our citizens is one of the fundamental principles of our Republic. Society's goals are best achieved by the full development of its human resources; education enables individuals to realize their potentials. Equal access to higher education should be provided to every person capable of benefiting from it. The Regents reaffirm their commitment to enroll more students from minority groups throughout the public higher education system. Denial of access is not only an injustice to the individual, but also a preclusion of an individual's potential contribution to society which would benefit others. There are three basic components in assuring equal opportunity for every qualified individual: adequate financial aid; geographical as well as open access including support services; and ready transfer of academic work from two to four year institutions. The Regents have pledged support to these within the Long Range Plan, and now reaffirm that commitment. Adequate financial aid is the first component required to assure access. Numerous federal and state programs are available for needy students. To offset both decreasing federal aid and rising tuitions, the Regents have established a tuition waiver policy which assures that no student will be denied access because of financial need.

Both open access and geographical access to the system are guaranteed by the existence of community colleges throughout the state. No student will be denied access to post-secondary education

because our community colleges form a means of entry to our higher educational system. They perform a distinctive service by providing accessible, low cost, high quality programs, both technical-vocational and liberal arts transfer. With their special emphasis on teaching excellence and their strong counseling programs, they perform an equally important service in providing compensatory educational programs for students whose previous educations have been limited or inadequate. The existence of learning centers and computer-assisted and self-paced learning modules, coupled with a faculty sensitive to student needs, creates an environment to motivate students whose previous educations have been limited or inadequate. While open and geographical access is important, the Board of Regents is cognizant of the responsibility to vigorously recruit, admit and assist minority students to graduate from state colleges and universities.

The third component to assure maximum access is the strengthening of the transfer process between the two and four year institutions within the public higher educational system. A task force already is developing policies which will provide a smoother and more effective transition from community colleges to four year colleges and universities for students who wish to continue their educations at the baccalaureate level. Even now, any citizen in Massachusetts who receives a public associate degree is eligible for admission to one of the public four year colleges or one of the public universities. Each Community College however, should make clear to students upon matriculation and systematically thereafter, which applicable course credits from transfer and career programs will be accepted by senior colleges and universities.

QUALITY

The commitment to access cannot be fulfilled without a corresponding commitment to quality. Because developing and maintaining rigorous programs is critical, we have embarked on a program review process that evaluates new initiatives as well as existing programs. Equally important is the establishment of appropriate admissions standards. These standards must balance the

needs of the wide range of students who vary in age, in preparation, and in motivation, with the equally compelling need to preserve and enhance the intellectual strengths of our institutions. By insisting on a minimum standard of preparation for our students entering senior public institutions, we assure that these students are able to begin immediately rigorous baccalaureate programs.

The citizens of the Commonwealth have the right to expect that they should be able to enroll in rigorous programs of quality that prepare them to meet the challenges of a complex and technological society. The complexity of contemporary issues and the global reach of social and economic problems make a sound education imperative for our citizenry. A quality education must prepare people not only to contribute to the progress of our nation but also to increase their awareness of the richness and variety of life.

DIVERSITY

In a complex and varied society, a broad spectrum of educational opportunities is a necessity. Indeed, the Regents have already recognized their responsibility to promote diversity within the higher educational system by approving differentiated missions for community colleges, state colleges and universities. Such distinctive roles permit the development of diversified educational programs to efficiently and effectively meet the varied needs of students.

To achieve a diverse student body, the Regents recognize that our public institutions should be enrolling more students from minority groups. They reaffirm their commitment to enroll and retain more students from these groups, with the goal of substantially increasing their presence throughout the public higher education system. Consistent with the Long Range Plan, the Regents will require that each institution develop strategies to increase the numbers of minorities and provide services to ensure their retention and success. Such policies should increase minority representation in professional fields which have traditionally lacked minority participation. Colleges and universities must provide better academic and counseling support services for all those who need and

can benefit from them. The institutions will submit these plans along with their admissions policies to the Regents for approval.

It is our firm belief that if the public institutions of higher education of this Commonwealth are to meet their objectives, admissions standards must enhance quality, guarantee access, and reflect diversity. We recognize that one of the challenges of this decade is to achieve a balance between goals that often seem to be opposed. For some, access and quality are mutually exclusive. We disagree. Assuming that both have value and must be fostered, the challenge lies in reconciling them.

EDUCATIONAL COOPERATION

Much of the existing tension between the goals of quality and access will dissipate if we can work together with the elementary and secondary schools to rejuvenate the school curriculum. To quote the President's Commission on Higher Education, "The first condition toward equality of opportunity for a college education can only be satisfied when every qualified young person, irrespective of race, creed, color, sex, national origin, or economic status is assured of the opportunity for a good high school education in an accredited institution." For that reason we have proposed more stringent academic unit requirements for secondary school students who plan to enter state colleges and universities. Evidence indicates that such preparation in traditional fields of knowledge is indispensable to successful completion of a college curriculum. We also recognize that this will not be an easy task.

Also, it must be emphasized that admissions standards should be complemented by increased efforts at improving retention and success rates of our college students. A direct relationship exists between successful retention rates and adequate support services including counseling and tutoring. Failure to provide these vital services will defeat the goals of access and quality. We believe that all of our institutions must strive to increase the proportion of students who successfully complete their undergraduate educations and graduate.

II. COMPONENTS OF REGENTS' ADMISSIONS STANDARDS

With the guiding principles of access, quality, and diversity in mind, the Board of Regents hereby establishes admissions standards for the public colleges and universities. These standards provide a framework within which each individual college or university will develop its own admissions policy. The framework consists of four components:

1. Academic units required of all applicants who wish to enter the public four year colleges and universities directly from high school.
2. An admissions eligibility index ("sliding scale") which relates scores on the Scholastic Aptitude Test with weighted high school class rank for students entering directly from high school.
3. Admissions eligibility for students with special talents entering directly from high school.
4. A transfer policy which provides a clear path to the senior institutions for the community college students.

HIGH SCHOOL UNIT REQUIREMENTS

With two exceptions, the following table describes in detail the high school academic units to be required of all freshmen entering public four year colleges and universities. Students who graduated from high school more than three years before applying to college will be exempted from these unit requirements. Also, in 1987, graduates of high schools which have failed to incorporate the prescribed courses into their curriculums will be eligible for admission under special conditions, which are described at the end of this section. To enable school districts to have ample time to make any necessary personnel adjustments, these units will be phased in over a four year period. We believe that these high school academic units provide a student with the essential background necessary for success at the college level. English, mathematics, and the sciences provide a firm foundation in critical and creative thinking. The humanities, with

their great works, expose students to the intellectual, moral and esthetic traditions of our civilization.

Units earned in high school fall into two categories, required and elective. The first category includes 13 units which are specifically required of all students. The second category includes eight groups of elective courses. In selecting their elective units, students should consider their individual needs and aspirations.

The high school academic unit requirements are to be phased in over a four year period. Until 1986 present practice will prevail, although 10 academic units are recommended for fall '84 and 12 units for fall '85.

Academic Unit Requirements

	84	85	86	87
	Rec.	Rec.	Req.	Req.
A. Required units				
English	3	3a	3a	4a
Mathematics ^b	2	2	2	3
Natural & Physical Sciences ^c	1	2	2	2
Social Science ^d	1	2	2	2
Foreign Language ^e			(2) Rec.	2
B. Elective Units from Specified Groups	3	3	3	3
English				
Mathematics				
Computer Science ^f				
Natural and Physical Sciences				
Social Science				
Foreign Language				
Visual & Performing Arts ^g				
Humanities				
TOTAL	10	12	12(req) 14(rec)	16

- a. These must be college preparatory courses in composition and literature which include the development of reading, writing, and comprehension skills. Students should be familiar with and practice different modes of writing because they will need to write essays, examinations, reports and term papers. Competence in language serves a variety of purposes: accomplishing the business of daily life, communicating ideas, and expanding thought.

- b. These must be college preparatory courses in such subjects as algebra, geometry, trigonometry, elementary functions and mathematical analysis. Students need these skills to major in a wide range of fields. A fourth year of mathematics, usually calculus, is strongly recommended for students who plan to enter fields such as engineering or physics.
- c. Both years should include laboratory science. For those students contemplating majors in science or engineering, chemistry and physics are strongly recommended. College-bound students will need sufficient knowledge to be aware of themselves in a complex scientific environment and to function as responsible citizens in a society shaped by science and technology.
- d. This requirement must include one year of United States history and government. If students are to become effective citizens in a democratic society, they need knowledge about governmental institutions and values in their own society and in other major societies of the world.
- e. Students are encouraged to elect a third year of study. Knowledge of another language fosters greater awareness of cultural diversity among peoples. By learning another language, students gain greater insight into the workings of their native languages.
- f. Students are encouraged to become knowledgeable about computers because of their increasing importance in this society. All students should become computer literate. While the current standards strongly recommend the attainment of computer skills, the Board is planning to establish a requirement for computer literacy subsequent to the review of the admissions standards.
- g. All students are encouraged to broaden their college preparatory experience by electing courses in the visual and performing arts and the humanities from among the offerings available at their high schools. The academic units required by these admissions standards at present should be viewed only as a basic foundation

for a college preparatory program. Courses in visual and performing arts and the humanities are of value to all students whatever their intended fields of study. These disciplines provide a unique record of diverse cultures. They are the creative modes by which all peoples can enrich their lives both by self-expression and by response to the expressions of others.

All high schools should recognize the importance of effective advising processes essential to students in selecting an appropriate program of study to strengthen their weaknesses and to enhance their potentials to succeed in undertaking college level course work.

Students graduating from vocational-technical high schools (Chapter 74 students) may meet the requirements for two years of foreign language as follows:

1. for those students who would seek admission to college programs requiring two years of foreign language background, foreign language will be required;
2. for those students seeking admission to all other college programs, foreign language is recommended;
3. for certain students two years of computer science may be substituted;
4. for the other students the three to four years of technical vocabulary work may be substituted.

Chapter 74 students may meet the three required elective units through coursework in their vocational-technical curriculum. Electives may be fulfilled by having the high school provide a record to the college or university showing accomplishment of relevant English, mathematics, science, social studies or humanities goals within the vocational-technical training portion of their program (over and above the eleven required units). The ultimate judgment on equivalency rests with the admitting college or university.

Students from school districts which fail to implement minimum course

requirements will be eligible for admission without meeting the course requirements specified in these standards. If accepted and admitted, such students will be required to satisfy minimum course requirements by the time they begin their second year of full-time study. College level credits earned in the process of satisfying minimum course requirements may be applied toward the degree.

Students may satisfy minimum course requirements in the following ways:

1. they may take a college course in the same area of study as each college preparatory unit not completed in high school.
2. they may earn high school credit in the same area of study by attending summer school or night school;
3. they may satisfy the requirement in the same area of study by attaining acceptable scores in the College Level Examination Program (C.L.E.P.).

Colleges and universities have an obligation to assist such students through academic counseling and by provision of courses at summer sessions which will allow students to satisfy minimum course requirements.

ADMISSIONS ELIGIBILITY INDEX

Colleges and universities should ensure that no student be excluded from admission solely because of deficiencies in academic preparation. Therefore, SAT and/or class rank in high schools are not necessarily the best predictors for all students. The following admissions eligibility index for public four year colleges and universities is applicable to the students entering directly from high school. Institutional diversity, mentioned earlier, will emerge from a diverse student body. Such diversity will enrich campus life and further the goal of access. The Regents specifically exempt the following groups from the admissions eligibility index segment of the standards:

1. G.E.D. students, evening school graduates and students who graduated from high school more than three years before applying to college. These students are best evaluated by their levels of maturity and motivation. Where necessary, colleges and universities should provide special counseling and refresher courses.
2. Students whose special needs have been identified by means of assessments prescribed in Chapter 766. After such students are admitted, colleges and universities should provide individual testing so that they may achieve their full potentials.
3. Educationally Disadvantaged Students. In this society factors such as low income*, limited English proficiency**, and discrimination because of race***, have limited opportunities for some students to receive adequate preparation for college. Colleges and universities should ensure that they are not excluded from admission solely because of deficiencies in academic preparation. Such institutions should provide programs to improve such students' academic skills so that they can achieve their full potentials.
4. Students transferring into baccalaureate institutions after having received associate degrees from public community colleges.

The baccalaureate institutions will develop for approval by the Regents the policy which will be used in the admissions evaluation of the above mentioned students. In this way, institutions can have the flexibility to develop policies which meet the needs of special

* Financial guidelines should be based upon criteria specified in nationally approved financial aid need analysis methodology.

** As defined in Massachusetts Guidelines for Disadvantaged Student Programs.

*** Including Afro-Americans, Hispanic-Americans, Native Americans, Cape Verdean Americans and Asian-Americans.

constituencies within their service areas. Additionally, institutions will provide annual updates of the numbers admitted in each category and an annual summary evaluation of their performance as they progress academically.

The eligibility index for traditional students entering into baccalaureate schools is as follows:

For the Universities

For State Colleges

Combined SAT score	Weighted* % Rank	Combined SAT score	Weighted* % Rank
	Weighted Rank alone		Weighted Rank alone
500	upper 15	500	upper 25
550	20	550	30
600	25	600	35
650	30	650	40
700	35	700	45
750	40	750	50
800	45	800	60
850	50	850	65
900	55	900	70
950	60	950	75
1000	65	1000	80
1050	70	1050	85
1100	75	1100	90
1150	80	SAT alone	
1200	85		
1250	90		
1300 SAT alone			

*Admissions decisions concerning students who will be newly admitted in Fall 1984 should be based on ranking systems currently in place, either weighted or unweighted. Subsequent admissions decisions, however, should be based on a uniform weighted ranking system. The Board of Regents will form a task force with representation from secondary and higher education to develop statewide guidelines for a uniform system of computing class rank.

The two factors, SAT scores and high school rank, combined in the eligibility index for students entering directly from high school have been selected because, taken together, they provide the best evidence of readiness to succeed in college.¹ Also, a student's high school academic record and a standardized test score, taken together, are the credentials most often used by colleges and universities in making admissions decisions.

It should be emphasized that these eligibility requirements, both the academic units and sliding scale, refer only to eligibility for admission to baccalaureate colleges and universities and do not guarantee admission. These are minimum standards for eligibility alone. Each institution will develop its own admissions policy, and examine applicants based on their entire academic records. Traditionally, admissions policies and procedures are individualized, consisting of a review of a student's total high school performance and other evidence deemed appropriate, as well as quantitative factors.

In developing their admissions policies, state colleges and universities must establish quantitative standards at least equal to the academic eligibility index. Individual institutions, may, as stated earlier, increase the standards for eligibility for admission or provide additional criteria in making admission decisions. In addition to the requirements stated earlier, they will also establish a mean which may be used as a base line against which to evaluate progress towards improving the profile of entering students. Each institution will be expected to forward its complete admissions policy for review and approval by the Regents before that policy is fully implemented.

1. Halstead, Kent, Statewide Planning in Higher Education.
U.S. Printing Office. 1980

ADMISSIONS ELIGIBILITY FOR STUDENTS WITH SPECIAL TALENTS
ENTERING DIRECTLY FROM HIGH SCHOOL

The importance of correlating student needs and abilities with the distinctive strengths of our varied colleges and universities already has been mentioned. Thus it is only appropriate that each campus should develop supplemental criteria for students entering directly from high school with particular talents who can benefit from specific programs of study at any given college or university. The specific criteria used here will be subject to Regents' approval, and annual reports on the numbers accepted in this category, along with follow up studies on their academic performance, must be provided.

III. TRANSFER POLICY

As minimum standards are phased in over the next four years, a meaningful transfer process becomes essential to the smooth functioning of the system. As noted before, a task force is already at work to provide a more clearly defined policy which enables students to transfer easily to a four year institution from a community college. This policy is especially critical to accessibility because all community colleges will remain open admissions institutions.

A clearly defined transfer articulation policy provides academic mobility for every student entering the public education system of this Commonwealth. In effect, every student, regardless of his/her individual background or academic performance in high school, will have the opportunity to earn a baccalaureate degree at a public college or university in Massachusetts. Moreover, with support services such as tutorials and courses in basic skills concentrated at the community college level, these students will be provided with the tools they need to overcome past deficiencies. In summary, our public higher educational system remains totally accessible to all who would take advantage of it.

To facilitate the transfer process, the percentage of seats made available in our colleges and universities to transfer students will be increased over the next five years as follows:

Percent of Admission Seats provided for
Associate Degree Transfers from Community
Colleges

For September 1983	Present Practice This to be used as Base Year %
For September 1984	Present Practice
For September 1985	Present Practice
For September 1986	Base Year % plus up to 4% of Admission Seats
For September 1987	Base Year % plus up to 8% of Admission Seats
For September 1988	Base Year % plus up to 12% of Admission Seats
For September 1989	Base Year % plus up to 16% of Admission Seats

IV. Monitoring Process

The Regents will collect and carefully analyze information about enrolled students. A predictive validity study will be undertaken over the next three years to determine whether SAT scores, achievement test scores and high school rank are the best predictors of success in college. These measures are presently utilized nationally by approximately 70% of the four-year public colleges as sole, or very important factors, in making

admissions decisions.¹ The pattern of courses and student achievement also will be studied to determine whether or not a correlation exists.

The Board of Regents will establish an Advisory Committee on Admissions Standards to monitor the implementation of these standards, including the study of their effectiveness in predicting success in college for all students. The task force, which will include minority representation, will be broadly representative of the education community. Members will work with the Board of Regents' staff and advise the Chancellor on issues which are important in accomplishing the goals outlined in this document. A final review of the standards will be completed no later than December 1988, at which time they will be reaffirmed or modified.

1. Undergraduate Admissions: A Report on a Survey by the American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers and the College Board, CEEB, New York, 1980.

